

Message Text

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TO USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652:

TAGS: TGEN, OECD

SUBJECT: SCIENCE MINISTERS MEETING: DRAFT COMMUNIQUE

REF: OECD PARIS 13165

1. WE HAVE REVIEWED COMMUNIQUE DISCUSSED REFTEL AND HAND-CARRIED TO WASHINGTON BY KING. OVERALL STRUCTURE OF DOCUMENT IS APPROPRIATE, BUT IT WOULD BENEFIT FROM A MORE POLITICAL CAST. REFERENCE SHOULD BE MADE TO (A) CONTINUING VITALITY OF S&T AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIES OF OECD COUNTRIES AND (B) IMPORTANCE OF S&T TO SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS FACING THE DEVELOPING NATIONS. LANGUAGE OF DOCUMENT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED-UP AND FUZZY CONCEPTS (E.G. FREQUENT USE OF PHRASE "SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY" WITH NO INDICATION WHETHER REFERENCE IS TO A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE, AN ECONOMIC SECTOR, OR WHAT) ELIMINATED TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE. ALSO, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNDEFINED NEW WORK SHOULD BE TONED DOWN. TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE REVISED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ABOVE COMMENTS FOLLOWS. AT ITS DISCRETION MISSION MAY INTRODUCE THIS TEXT AS U.S. ALTERNATIVE WHEN COUNCIL DISCUSSION HELD OR

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MAY DRAW UPON IT IN SEEKING CHANGES TO SECRETARIAT/BUREAU DRAFT.

2. DRAFT COMMUNIQUE: THE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY MET AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON JUNE 24-25

UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR. C.M. DRURY, MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF CANADA.

3. THE MINISTERS NOTED THAT THE CONTRIBUTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO THEIR ECONOMIES AND TO THE WORLD ECONOMY HAS BEEN AND REMAINS INDISPENSIBLE. THEY AGREED THAT THE IMPRESSIVE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF THE OECD COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO BE CENTRAL TO THE ABILITY OF THESE COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ASPIRATIONS AND TO ASSIST IN THE SOLUTION OF THE CRITICAL PROBLEMS FACING THE DEVELOPING NATIONS. BY PURSUING VIGOROUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THE OECD NATIONS SERVE TO IDENTIFY IMPORTANT SOLUTIONS OR OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH FORMIDABLE PROBLEMS IN THE FIELDS OF ENERGY, NUTRITION, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER AREAS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

4. THE MINISTERS RECOGNIZED THAT SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE MUST BE MORE EFFECTIVELY APPLIED TO BOTH THE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEMS FACING TODAY'S SOCIETY. A NEW AND MORE ORDERLY APPROACH TO POLICY MAKING IS CALLED FOR WITHIN WHICH SCIENCE POLICY AGENCIES WILL HAVE A SPECIAL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

5. THE OVERALL THEME OF THE MEETING WAS "SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF COMPLEX PROBLEMS." DISCUSSION CENTERED ON SIX MAIN TOPICS, EACH OF WHICH HAS IMPORTANT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

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I. THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN POLICY MAKING

6. THE MINISTERS NOTED THAT WHILE SCIENCE POLICY CONTINUES TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A NECESSARY AND CENTRAL ELEMENT OF OVERALL DECISION MAKING, MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO INSURE THE INTEGRATION OF SCIENTIFIC INSIGHTS INTO THE POLICY PROCESS NEED TO BE DEVISED. TO THIS END, THEY SAW AN URGENT NEED TO CONTINUE, WITHIN OECD'S COMMITTEE ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY, IN-DEPTH, COMPARATIVE EVALUATIONS OF THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF VARIOUS SCIENCE POLICY BODIES.

7. EVER SINCE THE EMERGENCE OF SCIENCE POLICY AS A RECOGNIZED COMPONENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY MAKING, VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE ITS EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTED. THIS EXPERIENCE PROVIDES A BASIS FOR EVALUATING THE ROLE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SCIENCE POLICY BODIES, AT A TIME WHEN

THE NEED FOR MID AND LONG-TERM PROSPECTIVE PLANNING TO ENSURE THE COMPATIBILITY OF OPTIONS AND TO ANTICIPATE FUTURE PROBLEMS IS WIDELY APPRECIATED. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ARE MAJOR AGENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS MUST BE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORMULATION OF MID AND LONG-TERM GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES.

8. THE MINISTERS, THEREFORE, AGREED THAT THE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL POLICY, COULD ASSIST MEMBER COUNTRIES BY:

- IDENTIFYING THOSE ELEMENTS OF MEDIUM AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING AND BROAD PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS WHICH COULD BENEFIT FROM INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION;

- EXAMINING THE MECHANISMS AND METHODS EMPLOYED BY MEMBER COUNTRIES TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF R&D PRIORITIES AMONG VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS;

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- EXPLORING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE NEW ECONOMIC TRENDS.

II. MANAGEMENT OF THE RESEARCH SYSTEM

9. THE MINISTERS STRESSED THAT ONE OF THE MAIN TASKS FACING GOVERNMENTS IS TO DETERMINE HOW RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAN BEST BE UTILIZED TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE PRESSING PROBLEMS OF MODERN DAY SOCIETY IN ALL SIGNIFICANT SECTORS. THEY FELT THAT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITIES OF THE OECD STATES, WHILE IMPRESSIVE, SHOULD BE FURTHER STRENGTHENED TO KEEP PACE WITH INCREASING CHALLENGES FACING SOCIETY. IT

WAS NOTED THAT ALL OECD GOVERNMENTS FACE FORMIDABLE PROBLEMS IN DECIDING HOW TO ALLOCATE THEIR RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. THE MINISTERS AGREED THAT EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE, PARTICULARLY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, TO PROVIDE A BETTER BASIS FOR DECISION-MAKING BY STRENGTHENING CAPABILITIES FOR THE ANALYSIS

AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DATA. THEY FURTHER AGREED THAT THE OECD SHOULD EXAMINE THE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS WHICH ARISE FROM ABRUPT CHANGES IN LEVELS OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING. THE NEED FOR GREATER STABILITY IN THIS AREA WAS JUDGED TO BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE.

III. SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

10. THE MINISTERS RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO UTILIZE THE RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION TO SATISFY EMERGING SOCIAL NEEDS. THEY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING A CLOSE ASSOCIATION OF THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, PARTICULARLY IN ADDRESSING PROBLEMS REQUIRING A BROAD INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND PERSPECTIVE. THEY NOTED THAT MUCH REMAINED TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO PERFECT AN UNDERSTANDING OF VARIOUS FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF INTER-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ADDRESSED TO SOLVING PRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

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IV. NEED FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

11. THE MINISTERS RECOGNIZED THAT AN INFORMED PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES HAS BECOME A CRITICAL CONDITION TO THEIR UTILIZATION. THIS HAS LED TO INCREASED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES, WHICH IS A WELCOMED DEVELOPMENT. THE MINISTERS CONCLUDED THAT THE OECD SHOULD REVIEW THE COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES OF MEMBER COUNTRIES REGARDING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISIONS INVOLVING THE BROAD INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES. IT WAS HOPED THAT THIS REVIEW WOULD MATERIALLY ASSIST MEMBER GOVERNMENTS TO DEVISE MORE EFFECTIVE MEANS OF INFORMING THE PUBLIC OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF NEW TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND SOLICITING PUBLIC REACTIONS.

V. NEW VISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

12. THE MINISTERS STRESSED THE CRITICAL NEED FOR A BETTER HUSBANDING BY SOCIETY OF THE WORLD'S NATURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS AND FOOD RESOURCES. THIS IS AN AREA OF GREAT INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD WHERE CONTINUOUS COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO WILL BE VITAL. THE LIMITATIONS ON EXISTING RESOURCES NEED TO BE RECOGNIZED REALISTICALLY, AND THE COMPLEX INTERACTIONS WITHIN THE RESOURCES SYSTEM REQUIRE

FURTHER EVALUATION. THE MINISTERS AGREED THAT THE OECD SHOULD UNDERTAKE NEW STUDIES AIMED AT ACHIEVING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCE SYSTEM.

VI. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

13. THE MINISTERS NOTED THAT SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL

COOPERATION BETWEEN AND AMONG THEIR COUNTRIES CONTINUES TO FLOURISH. NEVERTHELESS, THEY RECOGNIZED THAT A FURTHER RATIONALIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES WOULD BE BOTH BENEFICIAL AND DESIRABLE TO ASSURE OPTIMAL USE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

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THEY AGREED THAT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED AS A GOAL OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.

14. FINALLY, CONSCIOUS OF THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THEIR COUNTRIES TOWARD THE DEVELOPING NATIONS THE MINISTERS AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR NATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. THEY ALSO AGREED ON THE NECESSITY TO ACTIVELY REINFORCE COOPERATION BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD, WITH A VIEW TOWARD FACILITATING THE TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGIES AND THE STRENGTHENING OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES. INGERSOLL

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